

Location of detail on page 44.
See pages 38-39 for overall map.

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MASTER PLAN - Paddy Creek Visitors Center

After crossing Paddy Creek, the entry drive will climb in elevation and make a gentle curve along the ridgeline of the peninsula. At this point, a ranger's residence is located just off to the right with the home pulled back from the road to provide privacy while still allowing for the observation of the roadway. This positioning of the ranger residence provides a low key but effective way to monitor the park.

Just beyond the ranger's residence, the visitors center will be sited to take advantage of the broad vista west toward the Black Mountains. The Black Mountains extend along the horizon and the rock face of Shortoff Mountain is a prominent feature to the north. To enhance and preserve this dramatic view, a meadow is proposed on the slope opposite of the visitors center. Constructing and maintaining a meadow has been approved for several reasons. The viewshed across the proposed meadow location is outstanding. The area of Paddy Creek Peninsula around the planned visitors center is one of the areas most recently logged for timber. As the site is currently covered with early succession growth, no mature trees would have to be removed to create the meadow. The meadow would provide a location for wildlife viewing. This would enhance the visitor experience and expand the opportunities for wildlife interpretation near the visitors center. On a most functional level, the meadow would allow for the on site placement of strippings, excess topsoil and cut materials generated during construction, and may also provide a feasible location for the drainage field of the visitors center septic system. Without the creation of the meadow vista, most views on Paddy Creek Peninsula to the surrounding mountains will be obscured by the maturing tree canopy.

The new park land does not have access to public water or sewer service. The distance from the existing utilities makes extending water and sewer to the site cost prohibitive. Therefore, each facility, or cluster of facilities, will have to be serviced by a well and sanitary sewer provided through the construction of septic systems. Further study will be required to determine the optimum sewerage system for each facility and location. The RV dump station may be able to utilize the same system that will serve the visitors center. Areas with primitive camping and boat camping may be best served by composting toilets or other systems that do not require the construction of large drainage fields and the associated destruction of existing woodlands.



The visitors center will provide opportunities for nature interpretation and other environmentally focused programs for the public



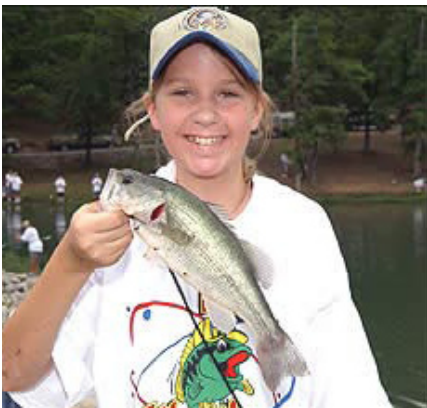
The Accessible/Interpretive Trail loops around the visitors center. The trail connects with hike-only trails that provide access to the cemeteries on Paddy Creek Peninsula.



Materials used in the park should blend with the natural setting.



The park will provide access for kayak and canoe.



Trails near the fishing pier and along the central cove shoreline provide access for bank fishing.



Multi-use trails will be designed to provide a range of technical levels so that casual riders and experienced riders will enjoy the park.

A short road off of the entry drive will lead south to the seasonal staff barracks and the maintenance area. These facilities are somewhat remote in order to reduce the impact on park visitors. Placing these uses closer to the main entrance and the highway minimizes the trip distance required for the delivery of supplies and materials and minimizes service vehicle routes through the park.

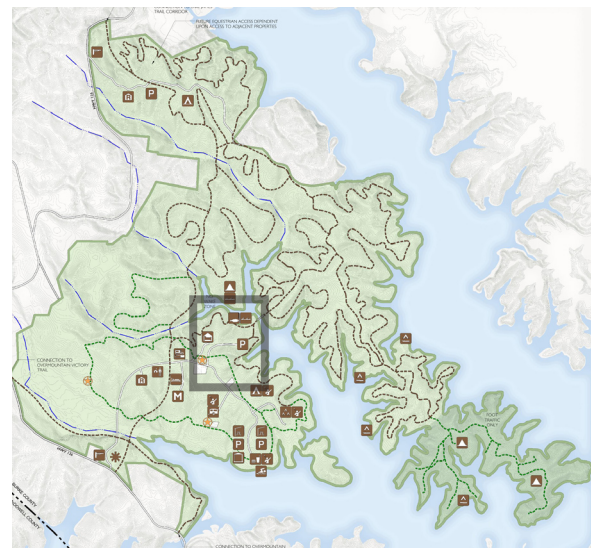
The next road to the north will be a short loop that runs through the cluster of rental cabins. This is one of the new ideas for the park. Such cabins have a long and treasured history in Appalachian parks. The simple cabins are planned to provide an alternative camping experience, especially for those visitors not inclined to camp in tents or not owning campers. Although finished with solid and timeless materials, such as stone and wooden shingles, the cabin construction will be simple and straightforward and will blend with the natural setting. Public input recommended that the rental rates for these cabins would be set at a very modest level in order to make them available to a broad range of park visitors.

Just past the cabin loop road, the main road will pass between a private in-holding parcel and one of the three cemeteries located on the peninsula. Alternative alignments for the road will need to be evaluated to identify the best way to minimize the exposure of the private parcel from the road without disturbing the cemeteries.

Beyond the cemetery, the cove access road turns off to the north. This road leads to the parking area above the cove at the Center Parcel. Washhouse facilities will be provided as this parking area which will serve as the trail head for a variety of daytime and overnight users. A trail will provide an accessible route for visitors to enjoy the lakeside trails and shoreline fishing trails along the shoreline of the cove.



Illustrative site plan of the rental cabin area and the cove trailhead (inset area highlighted at overall map to the right).





The relatively intense development on Paddy Creek Peninsula has a direct relationship with the location of developable areas and the need for certain uses to be located in close proximity to one another

Paddy Creek will provide three distinct camping alternatives. Recreational vehicle (RV) and trailer camping will be located on the south side of the main road after the visitors center. Placing RV facilities closest to the entrance will eliminate the need for large campers and trailers to be hauled through the rest of the park. The RV area will provide sites for 22 campers with water, electric and sanitary sewer hook-ups. A central washhouse will be provided with toilet and shower facilities. The campsites will be arranged along a single loop one-way road with all camp sites located to the outside of the roadway. This will provide campers an increased sense of privacy. A dump station will be located off of the main road for use as RV campers depart from the park.

Tent camping is located north of the main road on the cove side of the peninsula. The tent camping area shares an access drive with the group camping area. 35 campsites are planned along a loop and spur road system. The camping area is placed on the more level portion of the site in order to simplify access and minimize grading and site disruption. Each campsite will have a tent pad, picnic table, lantern hook and a fire ring. Clustered water service will be provided for each 4 to 6 sites. A central bathhouse will provide sinks, toilets and hot water showers.

Group camping will be clustered near the very end of the Paddy Creek Peninsula near the beginning of the central cove. Cars not destined for the group camp area are provided a turn out just before entering the group camp area. The group camp area will provide five campsites that accommodate 20 to 30 campers at each site. Parking will be concentrated in a remote parking lot that is integrated into the access drive end loop. Each campsite will have tent pads, a picnic table, fire ring and lantern hook. Water service will be provided at each group campsite. A central washhouse will provide sinks, toilets and hot water showers. The group camp area will also have a community area where all the campers can assemble for common meals, participate in educational programs or gather for a bonfire and story telling.

Hiking trails will link all camping areas to one another as well as to the swim beach area and the visitors center. A multi-use trail will run from the group camp area west to the tent camp area and then on to the center cove. This trail, routed along side the cove, will provide views of the lake.



Group camping will accommodate between 100 and 150 campers



Tent camping will provide an intimate setting in the forest



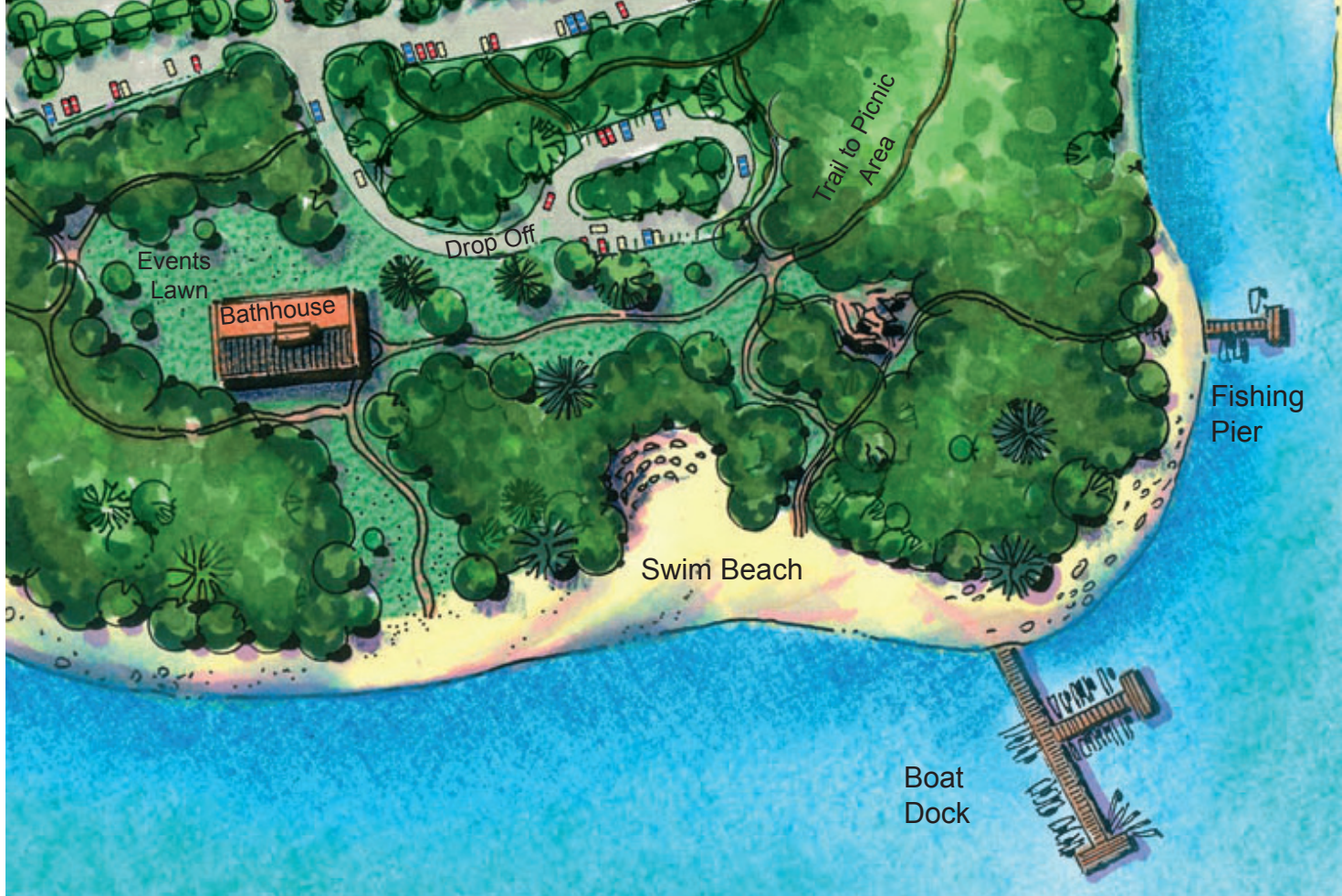
Campfires will be allowed in designated fire ring locations



A multi-use trail will parallel the cove shoreline and join tent and group camping areas and the swim beach facilities







The park will provide public access to Lake James. The illustrative site plan above shows the relationship between the drop off area, the bathhouse and the swim beach.



A natural beach is present at the proposed swim beach site



The new swim beach will accommodate three times the number of guests that can be accommodated at the existing facility



Beyond the water, the sand beach and the grass beach provide opportunities for lounging and observation. Additional viewing areas will be provided in the shade.



The bathhouse building will include concessions for visitors' convenience and provide a seasonal revenue source

In summer, Lake James State Park provides a place to come and enjoy lake swimming. The current swim beach and picnic facilities are consistently overwhelmed and staff must focus on traffic control and crowd management. The demand for lake access is expected to continue to rise. The master plan provides a swim beach facility that will triple the current user capacity. This increased capacity brings with it the need for expanded ancillary services and significantly larger parking areas. The new swim beach site takes advantage of a broad finger of land that slopes gently from the main road to a natural beach along the lake edge. Early in the analysis phase of the master plan, this site was field identified as the prime candidate for beach construction.

The beach will be located near the tip of Paddy Creek Peninsula facing south toward the lake. As visitors make their approach, the entry drive will be directed toward the lake providing glimpses of the water through the trees. The bathhouse and concessions building will be sited off to the side to allow guests a broad view across the activities lawn and down to the swim beach. At the end of the road is a turn around loop that will provide a place to drop off passengers and gear. Accessible parking will be provided directly adjacent to the building to minimize the trip for visitors with limited mobility. General parking will be located uphill from the facility with a natural buffer of trees retained between parking and the building. The large parking lot will be broken down into smaller areas through the use of wide planted medians. Median widths will approach 30' or more in width, and significant areas of existing trees will be able to be preserved. These medians will provide opportunities to replace lost shade trees and provide new screening.

The existing grade from the bathhouse/concessions building to the lake shore is very moderate slope. This allows the development of strong connections with the swim beach. Between the building and the beach, there are opportunities for many layers of activity. A small dining terrace could be located near the concessions to offer a social atmosphere for quick snacks and drinks. Picnic tables sited among the trees allow small groups a more private place for lunch. Seat walls along the path provide a comfortable place to wait for a companion or enjoy the woodland shade. Paths to the beach will be accessible and broad. Starting near the treeline, the grass beach stretches out providing a lawn for sun bathing and lounging. Great effort should be directed to the grading of the lawn area to minimize the need for retaining walls. The sand beach and swim area is broad and expansive extending approximately 700' across the shoreline. The gentle slope of the land extends into the water providing a good basis for the swim area construction.

The beach offers a strong invitation to boaters passing by and puts a very public face on the park. To enhance this image and to provide clear definition of the swim area for boat traffic, the master plan calls for the fishing pier and the boat dock pier. Further study is recommended to ensure that water flow through the swim area out to and beyond the boat pier would be sufficient to move and disperse any spot pollutants away from the swim area.



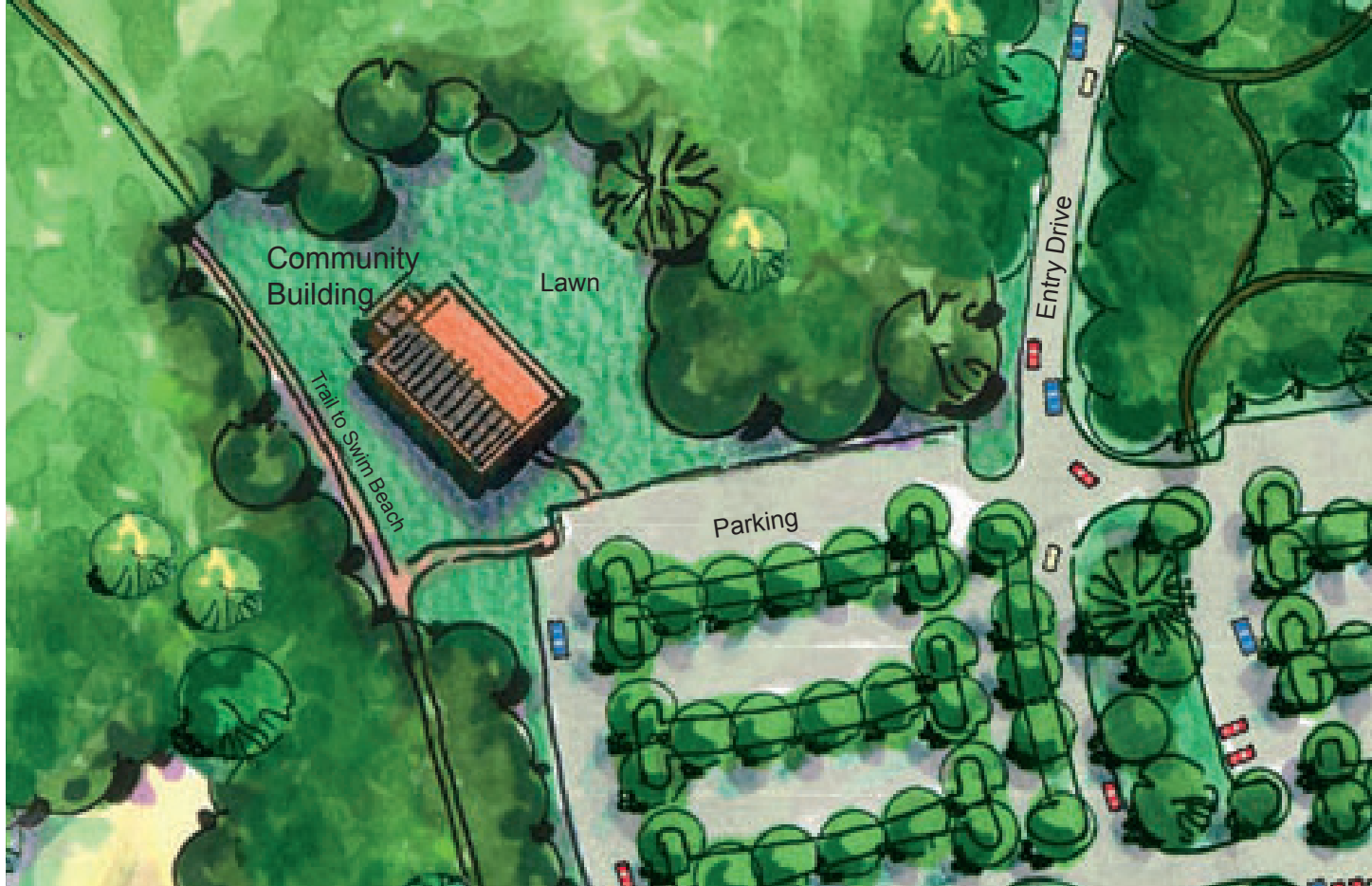
A terrace near the concessions area will provide a social setting for refreshments



Accessible paths will link the parking areas, bathhouse and swim beach areas



Walls along paths will provide casual seating in shaded areas



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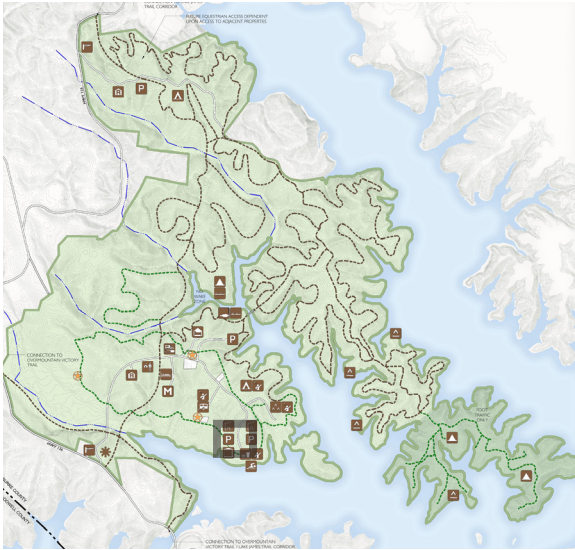


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- 1 The community building, adjacent lawn area and parking are detailed in the illustrative site plan above.
- 2 The lawn will provide an open area for children to play with easy supervision.
- 3 Programmed activities create community events.
- 4 At appropriate locations, the events lawn may be framed with stone terracing.
- 5 A small amphitheater or performance circle would expand the activities program.
- 6 Group shelters at the picnic area and the community building will accommodate larger gatherings.
- 7 Individual tables will be sited along the path linking the picnic area and the swim beach.
- 8 Tables will be sited to provide sunny and shaded environments for visitors.



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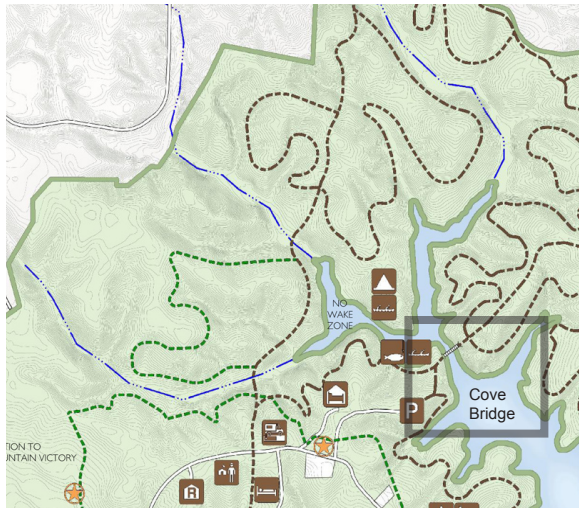
Key map for the illustrative site plan detail opposite, on page 54

Located near the bathhouse and concessions building, the community building will provide a place for larger groups to gather and meet. Inside, it will have a small kitchen and storage for chairs and tables. The community building will have bathrooms with internal and external access. A separate parking area will be located close to the community building. This parking area will allow for easier access and can serve as overflow parking when the number of swim beach visitors increases. A large picnic shelter is also nearby located just north of the parking area.

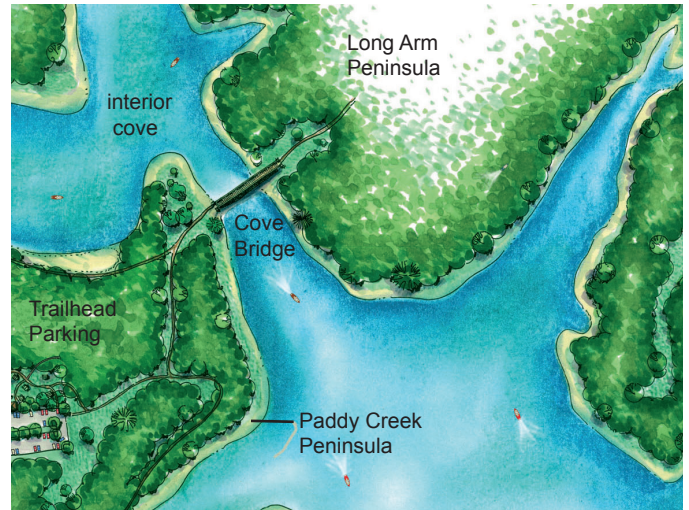
A lawn area will be located near the bathhouse building and near the community building. The lawn areas will be large and open with a gentle slope that will allow for a variety of uses. Given the topography, a small amphitheater may be integrated along the edge of the lawn. Some special events will be programmed. Other uses will occur as visitors plan their own activities. All structures and walls should use native materials that reinforce the park image and the environment of Lake James.

The picnic area, located north of the swim facility parking area, will provide 25 to 35 tables on pads. One group shelter is provided to accommodate larger gatherings and to provide a protected area during inclement weather. Additional picnic tables will be sited along the trail between the parking area and the washhouse building. These tables will offer shaded dining areas closer to the swim beach. Canoes may be rented at the concessions window of the bathhouse building.





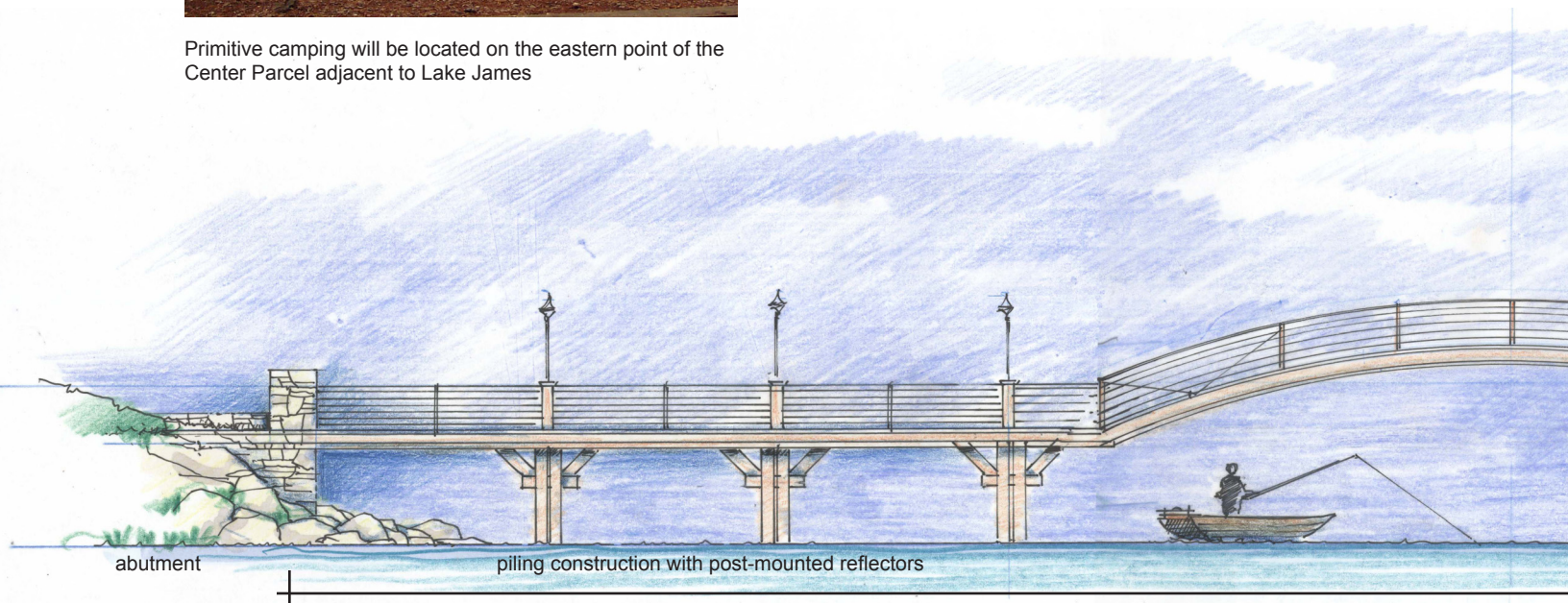
A portion of the Lake James Trail will run north-south through the Center Parcel crossing three small streams. The key box indicates the area of detail in the illustrative plan to the right.



The Cove Bridge, proposed to link Paddy Creek Peninsula and Long Arm Peninsula, will provide a major trail connection across the middle of the park. An illustrative image of the proposed bridge is located at the bottom of this page. A location key is indicated on the map to the left.



Primitive camping will be located on the eastern point of the Center Parcel adjacent to Lake James



This image is an illustrative elevation sketch of the proposed Cove Bridge that would link Paddy Creek Peninsula and Long Arm Peninsula

overall width estimated between 150' and 200'